Songs by the Gopis

From Krsna Book, Chapter 31 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

1st Gopi: My dear Krsna, ever since You took Your birth in this land of Vrajabhumi, everything appears to be glorious. The land of Vrndavana has become glorious, and it is as if the goddess of fortune is personally always existing here. But it is only we who are very unhappy, because we are searching for You, but cannot see You with our greatest effort. Our life is completely dependent upon You; therefore we request that You again come to us.

2nd Gopi: My dear Krsna, You are the life and soul even of the lotus flower that grows on the water of lakes made transparent by the clear rains of autumn. Although the lotus flowers are so beautiful, without Your glance they fade away. Similarly, without You, we are also dying.

Actually, we are neither Your wives nor slaves. You never spent any money for us, yet we are simply attracted by Your glance. Now, if we die without receiving Your glance, You'll be responsible for our deaths. Certainly the killing of women is a great sin, and if You do not come to see us and we die, You will suffer the reactions of sin. So please come see us.

Do not think that one can be killed only by certain weapons. We are being killed by Your absence. You should consider how You are responsible for killing women. We are always grateful to You because You have protected us many times: from the poisonous water of Yamuna, from the serpent Kaliya, from Bakasura, from the anger of Indra and his torrents of rain, from forest fire and so many other incidents.

You are the greatest and most powerful of all. It is wonderful for You to protect us from so many dangers, but we are surprised that You are neglecting us at this moment.

3rd Gopi: Dear Krsna, dear friend, we know very well that You are not actually the son of mother Yasoda or the cowherd man Nanda Maharaja. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the Supersoul of all living entities. You have, out of Your own causeless mercy, appeared in this world, requested by Lord Brahma for the protection of the world. It is by Your kindness only that You have appeared in the dynasty of Yadu.

O best in the dynasty of Yadu, if anyone afraid of this materialistic way of life takes shelter at Your lotus feet, You never deny him protection. Your movements are sweet, and You are independent, touching the goddess of fortune with one hand and in the other bearing a lotus flower. That is Your extraordinary feature. Please, therefore, come before us and bless us with the lotus flower in Your hand.

4th Gopi: Dear Krsna, You are the killer of all the fears of the inhabitants of Vrndavana. You are the supremely powerful hero, and we know that You can

kill the unnecessary pride of Your devotee as well as the pride of women like us simply by Your beautiful smile. We are simply Your maidservants and slaves; please, therefore, accept us by showing us Your lotus-like beautiful face.

1st Gopi: Dear Krsna, actually we have become very lusty, having been touched by Your lotus feet. Your lotus feet certainly kill all kinds of sinful activities of devotees who have taken shelter there. You are so kind that even the ordinary animals take shelter under Your lotus feet. Your lotus feet are also the residence of the goddess of fortune, yet You dance on the head of the Kaliya serpent with them. Now we are requesting You to kindly place Your lotus feet on our breasts and pacify our lusty desires to touch You.

2nd Gopi: O Lord, Your attractive eyes, like the lotus, are so nice and pleasing. Your sweet words are so fascinating that they please even the greatest scholars, who also become attracted to You. We are also attracted by Your speaking and by the beauty of Your face and eyes. Please, therefore, satisfy us by Your nectarean kisses.

3rd Gopi: Dear Lord, words spoken by You or words describing Your activities are full of nectar, and simply by speaking or hearing Your words one can be saved from the blazing fire of material existence. Great demigods like Lord Brahma and Lord Siva are always engaged in chanting the glories of Your words. They do so to eradicate the sinful activities of all living entities in the material world. If one simply tries to hear Your transcendental words, he can very quickly be elevated to the platform of pious activities.

For the Vaisnavas, Your words give transcendental pleasure, and saintly persons who are engaged in distributing Your transcendental message all over the world are first-class charitable persons. (This was confirmed by Rupa Gosvami also when he addressed Lord Caitanya as the most munificent incarnation because Lord Caitanya distributed the words of Krsna and love of Krsna free of charge all over the world.)

4th Gopi: Dear Krsna, You are very cunning. You can imagine how much we are distressed simply by remembering Your cunning smile, Your pleasing glance, Your walking with us in the forest of Vrndavana, and Your auspicious meditations. Your talks with us in lonely places were heart-warming. Now we are all aggrieved to remember Your behavior. Please save us. Dear Krsna, certainly You know how much we are saddened when You go out of Vrndavana village to tend the cows in the forest. How we are afflicted simply to think that Your soft lotus feet are being pricked by the dry grass and the tiny stones in the forest! We are so attached to You that we always think simply of Your lotus feet.

3rd Gopi: Dear Krsna, when You return from the pasturing ground with the animals, we see Your face covered by Your curly hair and dusted by the

hoof-dust of the cows. We see Your mildly smiling face, and our desire to enjoy You increases. O dear Krsna, You are the supreme lover, and You always give shelter to surrendered souls. You fulfill everyone's desire; Your lotus feet are even worshiped by Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe. To whomever worships Your lotus feet, You without a doubt always bestow Your benedictions. So kindly be pleased with us and keep Your lotus feet on our breasts and thus relieve our present distresses.

2nd Gopi: Dear Krsna, we are seeking Your kisses which You offer even to Your flute. The vibration of Your flute enchants the whole world and our hearts also. Kindly, therefore, return and kiss us with Your mouth of nectar.

Narrator: When Lord Krsna finally reappeared and assembled with the gopis, He looked very beautiful, just befitting a person with all kinds of opulences. In the Brahma-samhita, it is stated, *ananda-cin-maya-rasa-pratibhavitabhih*:

Krsna alone is not particularly beautiful, but when His energy—especially His pleasure energy, represented by Radharani—expands, He looks very magnificent.

The Mayavada conception of the perfection of the Absolute Truth without potency is due to insufficient knowledge. Actually, outside the exhibition of His different potencies, the Absolute Truth is not complete.

Ananda-cin-maya-rasa means that His body is a transcendental form of eternal bliss and knowledge. Krsna is always surrounded by different potencies, and therefore He is perfect and beautiful. We understand from Brahma-samhita and Skanda Purana that Krsna is always surrounded by many thousands of goddesses of fortune. The gopis are all goddesses of fortune, and Krsna took them hand in hand on the bank of the Yamuna.

It is said in the Skanda Purana that out of many thousands of gopis, 16,000 are predominant; out of those 16,000 gopis, 108 gopis are especially prominent; and out of 108 gopis, eight gopis are still more prominent; out of eight gopis, Radharani and Candravali are prominent; and out of these two gopis, Radharani is the most prominent.

When Krsna entered the forest on the bank of the Yamuna, the moonlight dissipated the surrounding darkness. Due to the season, flowers like the kunda and kadamba were blooming, and a gentle breeze was carrying their aroma. Due to the aroma, the bees were also flying in the breeze, thinking that the aroma was honey. The gopis made a seat for Krsna by leveling the soft sand and placing cloths over it.

The gopis who were gathered there were mostly all followers of the Vedas. In their previous births, during Lord Ramacandra's advent, they were Vedic scholars who desired the association of Lord Ramacandra in

conjugal love. Ramacandra gave them the benediction that they would be present for the advent of Lord Krsna, and He would fulfill their desires.

During Krsna's advent, the Vedic scholars took birth in the shape of the gopis in Vrndavana; as young gopis, they got the association of Krsna in fulfillment of their previous births' desire. The ultimate goal of their perfect desire was attained, and they were so joyous that they had nothing further to desire. This is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gita: if one attains the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then he has no desire for anything.

When the gopis had Krsna in their company, not only all their grief, but their lamenting in the absence of Krsna was relieved. They felt they had no desire to be fulfilled. Fully satisfied in the company of Krsna, they spread their cloths on the ground. These garments were made of fine linen and smeared with the red kunkuma which decorated their breasts. With great care they spread a sitting place for Krsna, their life and soul.

Sitting on the seat amongst the gopis, Krsna became more beautiful. Great yogis like Lord Siva, Lord Brahma or even Lord Sesa and others always try to fix their attention upon Krsna in their heart, but here the gopis actually saw Krsna seated before them on their cloths. In the society of the gopis, Krsna looked very beautiful. They were the most beautiful damsels within the three worlds, and they assembled together around Krsna.

It may be asked herein how Krsna seated Himself beside so many gopis and yet sat alone. There is a significant word in this verse: *isvara*. As it is stated in the Bhagavad-gita, *isvarah sarva-bhutanam*.
Krsna is the Supersoul seated in everyone's heart.

Krsna also manifested this potency of expansion in this gathering with the gopis. Krsna was sitting by the side of each gopi, unseen by the others. Krsna was so kind to the gopis that instead of sitting in their hearts to be appreciated in yogic meditation, He seated Himself by their sides. By seating Himself outside, He showed special favor to the gopis, who were the selected beauties of all creation. Having gotten their most beloved Lord, the gopis began to please Him by moving their eyebrows and smiling and also by suppressing their anger. Some of them took His lotus feet in their laps and began to massage Him. And while smiling, they confidentially expressed their suppressed anger and said:

1st Gopi: Dear Krsna, we are ordinary women of Vrndavana, and we do not know much about Vedic knowledge—what is right and what is wrong. We therefore put a question to You, and, since You are very learned, You can answer it properly. In dealing between lovers, we find that there are three classes of men. One class simply receives, another class reciprocates favorably, even if the lover is very contrary, and the third class neither acts

contrary nor answers favorably in dealings of love. So out of these three classes, which do You prefer, or which do You call honest?

Krsna: My dear friends, persons who simply reciprocate the loving dealings of the other party are just like merchants. They give in loving affairs as much as they get from the other party. Practically there is no question of love. It is simply business dealing, and it is self-interested or self-centered. Better the second class of men, who love in spite of the opposite party's contrariness; even those without a tinge of loving affairs are better than the merchants. Sincere love can be seen when the father and mother love their children in spite of their children's neglect. The third class neither reciprocates nor neglects. They can be further divided into two classes. One is the self-satisfied, who do not require anyone's love.

They are called *atmarama*, which means they are absorbed in the thought of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and so do not care whether one loves them or not. But another class are ungrateful men. They are called callous. The men in this group revolt against superior persons. For instance, a son, in spite of receiving all kinds of things from loving parents, may be callous and not reciprocate. Those in this class are generally known as *guru-druhah*, which means they receive favors from the parents or the spiritual master and yet neglect them.

Narrator: Krsna indirectly answered the questions of the gopis, even those questions which implied that Krsna did not properly receive their dealings. In answer, Krsna said that He, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is self-satisfied. He does not require anyone's love, but at the same time He said that He is not ungrateful.

Krsna: My dear friends, you might be aggrieved by My words and acts, but you must know that sometimes I do not reciprocate My devotees' dealings with Me. It appears that My devotees are very much attached to Me, but sometimes I do not reciprocate their feelings properly in order to increase their love for Me more and more. If I can very easily be approached by them, they might think, 'Krsna is so easily available.'

So, sometimes I do not respond. If a person has no money but after some time accumulates some wealth and then loses it, he will think of the lost property twenty-four hours a day. Similarly, in order to increase the love of My devotees, sometimes I appear to be lost to them, and instead of forgetting Me, they feel their loving sentiments for Me increase.

My dear friends, do not think for a moment that I have been dealing with you just like ordinary devotees. I know what you are. You have forsaken all kinds of social and religious obligations; you have given up all connection with your parents.

Without caring for social convention and religious obligations, you have come to Me and loved Me, and I am so much obliged to you that I cannot

treat you as ordinary devotees. Do not think that I was away from you. I was near to you. I was simply seeing how much you were anxious for Me in My absence. So, please do not try to find fault in Me.

Because you consider Me so dear to you, kindly excuse Me if I have done anything wrong. I cannot repay your continual love for Me, even throughout the lifetimes of the demigods in the heavenly planets. It is impossible to repay you or show gratitude for your love; therefore please be satisfied by your own pious activities. You have displayed exemplary attraction for Me, overcoming the greatest difficulties arising from family connections. Please be satisfied with your highly exemplary character, for it is not possible for Me to repay your debt.

Narrator: The exemplary character of devotional service manifested by the devotees of Vrndavana is the purest type of devotion. It is enjoined in authoritative sastra that devotional service to Krsna cannot be checked by political or religious convention. The stage of devotional service is always transcendental. The gopis particularly showed pure devotional service towards Krsna, so much so that Krsna Himself remained indebted to them.

Lord Caitanya thus said that the devotional service manifested by the gopis in Vrndavana excelled all other methods of approaching the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (bhajan)